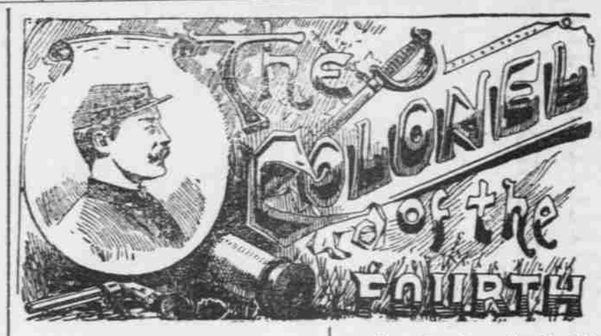


A Story of the Late War.

BY BERNARD BIGSBY,

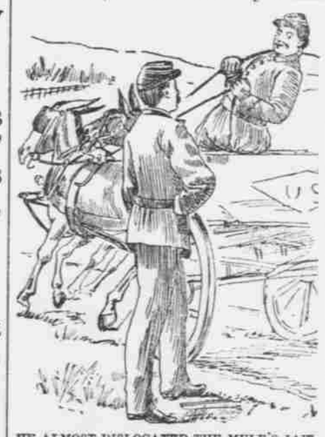
Author of "Loyal at Last," "My Lady Fantastic," "Ellen's Great Secret," "Fell Among Thieves," Etc.

"That's no way for a soldier to talk. I do believe, Jim, your moral sense is so blinded that you do not have the faintest appreciation of the word 'duty,'" Frank said, indignantly.

"Haven't I, though, old chap? Then that's all you know about it. Why, duty's been my bugbear ever since I was as high as your knee. Miss Ruth, Grace, old Brentwood, all the pious crowd at Meltonburg have dinged duty in my ears as long as I can remember, and, now I've got here, durn me if you aren't all at the same old game again, till I sometimes wonder if there is a spot in the world where a man like me, whose principles are a little knock-kneed, can get out of hearing of that bateful word."

"Not in this world, nor the next, I'm afraid," Besant said, with a smile at his companion's frankness.

"Then all I can say is, I wish I'd never been born. G'lang!" and Lawson gave the mule a vicious lash with his cowhide, as though resolved that there should be some vicarious suffering somewhere, then sank into moody silence.



HE ALMOST DISLOCATED THE MULE'S JAW.

Just before they reached camp, however, he recovered his usual air of self-satisfaction.

"Say, Frank," he said, "you couldn't fer the sake of old times lend me a ten-dollar bill, could you? We've not received a cent of pay since we left Columbus, and I'm dead broke. Why, it's a holy outrage the way we're treated. Guess those big-wigs at Washington would holler out pretty lively if pay-day came round and there was nothing in the treasury for them."

"It is a shame," Frank confessed.

"Well, could you let me have the dollars?"

"I could," was the frigid response.

"Then, will you?"

"What do you want it for?"

"To send to a girl."

Frank's eyes opened with astonishment.

"Don't ask me any questions about it," Lawson continued with earnestness. "Give me the money—it will be ruin if you don't."

Frank was puzzled.

"Well, here it is, Jim," he said, handing him the bill; "and as the Adjutant might kick against your carrying passengers, I'll get down and walk the rest of the way."

Lawson watched his retreating figure with a curious expression on his face, muttering to himself the while:

"That's the best thing you've done for yourself this many a day, Frank Besant, though you don't know it."

They were all glad to see Frank back, especially the Colonel, who had many kind words for the young man, whose story he listened to with intense interest, while Major Hopkins called him to his own tent and made him relate his adventures over again, paying him several handsome compliments. But the best news of all was that his name had been forwarded to the Governor of Ohio for a commission, and these gentlemen thought that their strong recommendations would be favorably received.

From Springfield the regiment went into winter camp at Sedalia, then the terminus of the Union Pacific railroad.

What the men endured during that severe winter under canvas no pen could describe. The weather was exceptionally inclement, and many a gallant fellow, who might have struck a blow for the Union, was either invalided home with a broken constitution or died outright of exposure. It was indeed a case of the survival of the fittest—those who were hardy enough to struggle through it all gave Uncle Sam sufficient assurance that his bounty money had been well laid out.

In the midst of this discomfort they were turned out several times to take part in slight engagements, while they celebrated Christmas by capturing a gigantic supply train on its way to Price, together with five hundred prisoners, and, what was of more consequence to many of them, "lots of loot."

It was on his return from this expedition that Frank Besant received the glorious tidings that his commission had arrived, and that he was appointed to a Lieutenancy in his own regiment. A little later and there would have been much grumbling at a man's stepping from the ranks to a seat at the officers' mess-table, but in those days military etiquette was not so strictly observed, and, besides, our hero was too popular for the tongue of envy to be raised against what all thought was a fair, though tardy, recognition of his merits.

This freak of good fortune gave Frank what he so much needed, association with men, who, by education and home culture, were more nearly his equals, a boon he appreciated. Besides rescuing him from the familiar approaches of James Lawson and his friends, a consideration to be by no means ignored.

When spring's first breath modified the icy clutches of winter, the order came for the regiment to march to St. Louis.

Charlie Fulton and Frank were now bosom friends, though they were in different companies, and it was from him that Besant learned of the intended departure.

"They're going to march us the whole blessed way over the railroad ties to save the Government the expense of transportation. It's a shame—a burning shame—especially after the way our poor fellows have suffered from this infernal climate," Fulton declared, with a gust of righteous indignation.

"It's pretty tough, but I guess they'll come out all right," was Frank's cheerful response.

"Eh, Besant, how I do envy you that even disposition of yours. Nothing seems to put you out—why, I've been raging ever since I heard the beastly news."

"And what good has your raging done you, Charlie?"

"Well, at any rate it has let some of the superfluous steam off and I'm likely to be a little more companionable. So come to my quarters and have a pipe with me. I'm expecting one or two good fellows you will be glad to meet."

"No cards?" Frank asked, sharply.

"Bless your innocent young heart, no—not even a game of Beggar-my-Neighbor to shock your moral principles."

"Who will be there?"

"Why, Green and Carson of ours, Gregory of the Thirty-ninth, and a cavalry fellow on his way home on furlough—he says he knows you, by the by—Mark Henderson, do you remember him?"

"I should think I did. Why, Charlie, he is the man Swayne and I rescued from the guerrillas."

"Ah! that is jolly. Well, put your forage-cap on and let us start."

Symposiums in officers' quarters were not always the kind of entertainments an elderly maiden lady of precise views would have declared particularly improving gatherings, but on this occasion the revelry was not very pronounced. Some whisky and a good deal of tobacco was consumed, of course, but beyond this mild dissipation there was little to complain of. Henderson seemed very pleased to meet Frank again.

"I knew you would be soon sitting at the high seats of the synagogue," he said, "and I told you so. Let me congratulate you on your promotion."

"Thank you," Frank replied—there was something about this man that impressed him with a feeling of admiration—"and let me congratulate you on the glorious charge your fellows made at Springfield. It was grand, heroic—I never heard or read of a more dashing feat of chivalry."

"It was a pretty tidy bit of fighting, I confess," the Captain drawled. "By the by, there was another acquaintance of yours on that battle-field, who rode as though he had a hundred lives at his disposal."

"No! Who?"

"Dick Swayne—you know he enlisted in our corps?"

"Indeed I do not. The last I saw of him he was pounding along with you to the battle-field, with the horse I'd been riding flying at your heels. And that reminds me—did you ever catch my runaway steed?"

"Aye, that we did. Both nags entered my troop with their master and took part in that scrimmage at Springfield. As for Dick Swayne, he fought like a wild-cat, and though I'm afraid we shall never make a smart soldier on parade out of him, he'll be worth his weight in gold as a scout."

"Was he wounded?"

"Never got a scratch — seemed as though he bore a charmed life."

"And you?"

"I was not so lucky; but the damage was not very serious—just a bullet through my shoulder-blade, which makes a convenient excuse for a brief trip home."

"Are you going far?"

"To Dayton, O. Then, I may take a run down to a little place called Meltonburg, where I've a sister married to a young doctor, who may be glad to practice his healing art on my person."

"Not Harry Burrows, surely?"

"Yes, Harry Burrows. Why, you don't mean to say that you know him, do you?"

"Know him! I've known him all my life. I live at Meltonburg and my father was a physician there, in whose office Harry got his first lessons in surgery. Oh, Captain Henderson, if you go there, you must call on my mother and Mr. Brentwood, the minister; and be sure to see how Grace—"

Frank paused and blushed scarlet. In the excitement of conversing with a man who was actually about to meet the dear ones at home, he had said more than he intended to do.

"Your sister, I suppose?" Henderson asked, surprised at his confusion.

"No, not exactly—my—that is to say, Mr. Brentwood's grandchild."

"A child, eh? Some little thing you've made a pet of—nay, don't be ashamed of loving children, I'm fond of them myself; so rest easy, for I'll take her a big box of candies and a kiss in your name, and she shall hear how—"

"But," Frank interrupted. "You can't do any such thing. Miss Grace Brentwood is a young lady of eighteen, who would be shocked if—"

"You did the kissing by proxy. Ah, lad, I see how the wind blows, and will be properly considerate of your interests, and respectful to the young lady."

"And you'll see my mother?"

"Indeed I will. And, talking about relations, do you know that I have an uncle in your regiment? No? Well, I have—one of the best fellows that ever put on a soldier's coat—Major Hopkins—I honestly don't think I ever met a kinder, truer gentleman than he is—if you get a chance, cultivate his acquaintance, for he's a good man for a youngster like you to know."

"Major Hopkins has been good enough to take some notice of me already," Frank said, intensely pleased at the turn the conversation was taking.

"Yes, I heard him say to-day that you were wonderfully like a boy he lost." Henderson continued: "You see, Uncle Jack has had a pretty tough time of it, and that perhaps accounts for his going a-soldiering when most men of his age and means would have preferred to send a substitute."

"A boy he lost?"

"Yes, his only child and wife were both drowned at sea, and he has never been the same man since."

But now, to Frank's chagrin, the conversation was interrupted by other members of the party.

Green and Carson, who were old friends of Henderson, were clamorous that he should sing them something before the meeting dispersed.

"Come now, Mark, no excuses. We don't often get such a chance, and we're not the slightest intention of missing it."

"Well, boys," was the cheery answer, "if you will promise to do justice to the chorus, I don't care if I do tip you a stave. So here goes. I stole the best half of it from Sever, but the felony won't spoil its flavor."

Then, in a rich baritone he trolled:

"The pickets are fast retreating, boys,
The last tattoo is beating, boys,
So let every man
Fill up his can
And drink to our next merry meeting, boys.

"The colonel so gayly prancing, boys,
Has a wonderful trick of advancing, boys;
When he sings out so large:
'Fix bayonets and charge!'
He sets all the Johnnies a-dancing, boys.

"Our sweethearts at home are sighing, boys,
For lads on the tented-field lying, boys;
But we're hearty as yet,
And don't mean to fret,
Or talk about death, till we're dying, boys.

"But 'tis time for a farewell-greeting, boys,
For the wing-footed hours are fleeting, boys,
So let every man
Fill up his can,
And drink to our next merry meeting, boys."

Once fairly started, the gallant cavalryman proved himself a prince of good company, song and story tripping from his lips without apparent effort. It was only when the party was breaking up that Frank managed to get a word or two with him.

"Shall I see you in the morning, Captain Henderson?" he asked, anxiously.

"Not likely, my boy; for I start on the first train, and you'll be hoofing it probably before I'm out of bed."

"Yes, that is so. Well, be sure and call on mother, if you go to Meltonburg—and, I say; if you tell her any thing of our way of living down here, don't draw your pictures with too many shadows in them."

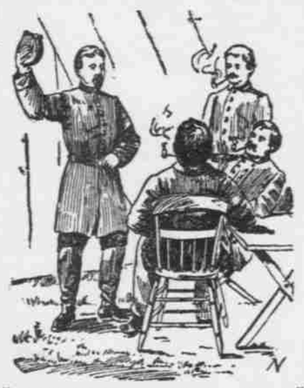
"I understand, and will be careful. But how about the fair Grace? Shall I tell her that you send her a kiss, but don't want the precious article delivered till you're at home?"

Frank laughed.

"Good-bye, old fellow," he said. "I wish with all my heart and soul I was going with you."

And there was something like tears in the lad's eyes as he grasped his friend's hand and turned gloomily away to his quarters.

The march to St. Louis proved worthy of Charlie Fulton's worst anticipations. The weather was execrable, rain, snow, sleet by turn assailing them—the ground now slushy as a swamp, and again frozen with ridges hard as iron. Sometimes they had to hunt for the least moist spot on which to pitch their tents, and at others they could not pitch their tents at all, because no human hands could drive the



"SO LET EVERY MAN FILL UP HIS CAN."

pegs into the adamantine earth, and all this suffering aggravated by the sight of trains rolling by them on which they ought to have been riding. Somebody's ears at Washington must have tingled, if the old saw be true, for curses loud and deep fell from the lips of the weary men as they dragged their tired limbs over the endless miles of road.

CHAPTER VII.
A VERY QUIET PARTY.

"Do I know the Besants, Mark?"

The speaker was Mrs. Burrows, a matron so young and pretty that one could see at a glance that the honeymoon had not yet reached its wane. "Why, of course I do, and if you'd taken the trouble to read my letters you would have discovered that I consider Mrs. Besant the quite too sweetest thing in the way of widows I ever saw or read about. What the men are thinking of to let her wear her weeds so long I'm sure I don't know. If I were a man—"

"Which, thank goodness, you're not," a manly voice interrupted. "The fact is, Mark, somebody once told Flossie that there is a strong resemblance between her and Mrs. Besant, and ever since she's done nothing but rave about her perfections."

"Oh, Harry Burrows, you wicked story-teller," the little lady flashed indignantly. "I only wish I were like Mrs. Besant. Now, Mark, don't pay any attention to his interruptions—I do know this lady very well, and I think her as near perfection as it is possible for woman to be. She might be a little too old for you—but, I don't know—she doesn't look half her age—and, oh, wouldn't it be nice, if—"

A roar of laughter from her husband interrupted the current of her remarks.

"Well," he cried, "if that isn't the boldest flight of feminine imagination I ever listened to! Why, Mark, Mrs. Besant is forty, if she is a day, and much too sensible a woman to encourage a flirtation with a man younger than herself, even if you were *epris* with her undeniable charms."

"Now this comes of visiting a pair of spoons like you two," Henderson said, with assumed regret. "I can not take a simple question about a neighbor, but off you fly into the realms of romance and matrimony. See, I didn't even ask after the widow at all—I said *the* Besants, as plain as I could speak. Now, do you think you can come down from your stilts long enough to tell me who the Besants are?"

"But, Mark, there are no Besants but Mrs. Besant," Mrs. Burrows pleaded.

"She is a widow with some means," her husband explained, "who lives in the best house in the village, and is decidedly *the* person of the place, as you will find out before you have been here very long. She has only one child, a son, who is now covering himself with glory on the battle-fields."

"Yes," Henderson interrupted. "I spent the evening with him a few nights ago at Sedalia."

"What!" Mrs. Burrows ejaculated. "You have been all night in the house and never told us this. Why, Mrs. Besant will be wild to see you. Get ready to go with me at once, sir, or I shall never be forgiven for having kept her so long from seeing you."

"I object," ruthlessly declared Dr. Burrows. "Mark is an invalid and wants rest." Then, seeing the pout on his wife's pretty lips, he added: "But I'll propose an amendment to your proposition. We've never attempted to give a party since we were married. Now, suppose you go to the Walnut House and invite Mrs. Besant to tea to-night. You can then trot round to the parsonage and ask Mr. Brentwood and his women-folk, and—"

"Won't that be perfectly splendid!" Flossie Burrows cried, and as Mark lazily accepted the plan it was forthwith carried out.

But Mark Henderson was fated to meet Mrs. Besant before the evening's festivities, for in the early afternoon a note came round from Walnut House to say that that lady's niece had just arrived from Chicago, whereupon the accommodating officer was commissioned by his sister to call and induce both ladies to honor them with their presence.

"You know I didn't dare to say that you were a friend of Frank's this morning, or we should have had the widow down here long before this, interrupting my immense preparations for supper—simply an army officer, my dear boy—so while you're there you can just let the flood-gates of your information flow, or you'll be boring us to death this evening with it all," the volatile little lady suggested.

"And this niece—do you know any thing about her?"

"Oh, I suppose she is a lady who was visiting Mrs. Besant two years ago, whom I met at the Brentwoods, when I first made Harry's acquaintance—not at all good looking and rather passe—not a bit your style, my dear; but, as she'll be up to her eyes unpacking, you may rely on having the fair widow all to yourself."

Henderson was a fine, handsome fellow, with a distinguished military bearing, and had often been the cynosure of admiring eyes on the parade-ground and in the drawing-room, but he had never known what it was to be stared at as he was by the gaping rustics on his way through the village, and well they might feast their eyes on his gallant figure; for Meltonburg was one of those delightfully primitive villages, where, if you had an egg for breakfast, there was not an old maid in the place who did not know which end you had broken it at before dinner-time, and consequently Mark's arrival had been heralded from house to house. His doughty deeds had been carried on the wings of gossip from fireside to fireside, and the patriotic editor of the Weekly Advertiser had primed them with a double-leaded description of the glorious cavalry charge at Springfield "in which the brother-in-law of our talented fellow citizen, Dr. Burrows," took so noble a part. Nay, not half an hour ago, the new edition of the paper had come out with the announcement in bold type that "The hero of the battle of Springfield is among us, visiting Doctor and Mrs. Burrows. It is proposed to give him a public reception before he goes back to gather fresh laurels," a piece of information which Mark's sister religiously kept out of his sight, for she felt sure if he saw it he would be off to Dayton by the first train. So the villagers stared their fill. Women ran to their doors to gaze after him as he passed, men gathered on the sidewalks to discuss his martial bearing, and more than once the little boys set up a feeble cheer, which was suppressed by their elders. If he had only entered a store, how they would have crowded in after him and solaced themselves in true rural fashion with a hearty hand-shake, but he kept right on up the main street till he reached the garden gate of the Walnut House, where he was lost to the gaze of his admirers.

A neat maid servant, all blushes and giggles, received him. Yes, Mrs. Besant was at home—would he be pleased to walk right in, and she would call her mistress?

Mark had time to notice the pretty refinement of the room, which bore so many traces of feminine taste and had such a home-like air about it, before his hostess made her appearance.

Yes, Mrs. Besant was decidedly handsome, he declared to himself, as she swept into the room with a grace of movement so fascinating in beautiful women. There was a charm of manner about her, too, which put him at his ease before he had been five minutes in her presence, and, oh! what a welcome she gave him, when she found that he had been a boon companion of her boy. How she loaded him with questions; how she reveled in the stories of her boy's adventures on the battle-field; how her color came and went as he told the tales of hair-breadth escapes; how she cunningly led him on to describe her darling's mode of life, his friends, his duties and every thing pertaining to him—why, time sped on with flying wings—for Mark loved to talk to pretty women, and it was nearly five o'clock before he had the grace to take his leave.

"But I must introduce you to my niece before you go," the widow said, as he stood hat in hand.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

[First published in the ABILENE WEEKLY REFLECTOR, Dec. 3, 1891.]

SHERIFF'S SALE.

Under and by virtue of an order of sale issued by the clerk of the district court of Dickinson county, state of Kansas, in a cause pending therein, wherein Joseph Scott is plaintiff and Sylvester Wick, Nancy Wick, Thomas Kirby and The Abilene Investment Company are defendants, I will,

On Monday, Jan. 4, A. D. 1892,

at the front door of the court house, in the city of Abilene, county of Dickinson, state of Kansas, at 10 o'clock a. m. of said day sell to the highest bidder for cash, the following described real estate to-wit:

The south half of the south half of section number ten (10), in township number sixteen (16) south, of range number two (2) east of the sixth principal meridian, in Dickinson county, state of Kansas.

The said real estate will be sold pursuant to the judgment of the court in said cause recited in said order of sale.

Witness my hand this 2nd day of Dec., A. D. 1891.

D. W. NAILL,
14-5 Sheriff of Dickinson County, Kas.

[First published in the ABILENE WEEKLY REFLECTOR Dec. 3, 1891.]

SHERIFF'S SALE.

Under and by virtue of an order of sale issued by the clerk of the District Court of Dickinson county, state of Kansas, in a cause pending therein, wherein Lavinda Greenwald is plaintiff and Williams, Hodge, Laura T. Hodge, James H. Beckham, John F. Agnew, The Abilene National Bank, U. G. Hawk, the Abilene Club and Hiland Southworth are defendants, I will,

On Monday, Jan. 4, A. D., 1892

at the front door of the court house, in the city of Abilene, county of Dickinson, State of Kansas, at 10 o'clock a. m. of said day sell to the highest bidder for cash, the following described real estate to-wit:

Lot number six (6), in Henry, Hodge and Reed's sub division of Thompson & McCoy's addition to the city of Abilene, in Dickinson county, state of Kansas.

The said real estate will be sold pursuant to the judgment of the court in said cause recited in said order of sale.

Witness my hand this 1st day of Dec., A. D. 1891. D. W. NAILL,
14-5 Sheriff of Dickinson County, Kas.

[First published in the ABILENE WEEKLY REFLECTOR, Dec. 3, 1891.]

SHERIFF'S SALE.

Under and by virtue of an order of sale issued by the clerk of the district court of Dickinson county, state of Kansas, in a cause pending therein, wherein William Conover is plaintiff and James L. Robb and Isaac Shocke and Daniel E. Snider, partners as Shockey & Snider and J. A. Spangler are defendants, I will,

On Monday, Jan. 4th, A. D. 1892,

at the front door of the court house, in the city of Abilene, county of Dickinson, state of Kansas, at 10 o'clock a. m. of said day, sell to the highest bidder for cash, the following described real estate to wit:

Lot number four (4), in block number nine (9), in Rice and Bonebrake's addition to the city of Abilene, in Dickinson county, state of Kansas.

The said real estate will be sold pursuant to the judgment of the Court in said cause recited in said order of sale.

Witness my hand this 1st day of Dec. A. D. 1891.

D. W. NAILL,
14-5 Sheriff Dickinson Co., Kas.

[First published in the ABILENE WEEKLY REFLECTOR, Dec. 3, 1891.]

SHERIFF'S SALE.

Under and by virtue of an order of sale issued by the Clerk of the District Court of Dickinson county, State of Kansas, in a cause pending therein wherein J. S. Drake is plaintiff and Pascal D. Drake, Alice A. Drake and M. T. Goss and Mrs. Florence A. Newhall, late partners as M. T. Goss & Company are defendants, I will,

On Monday, Jan. 4, A. D. 1892,

at the front door of the court house, in the City of Abilene, County of Dickinson, State of Kansas, at 10 o'clock a. m. of said day sell to the highest bidder for cash, the following described real estate to-wit:

Lots number seventeen (17) and eighteen (18), in block number twenty (20), in the town of Manchester, in Dickinson county, state of Kansas.

The said real estate will be sold pursuant to the judgment of the court in said cause recited in said order of sale.

Witness my hand this 1st day of Dec., A. D. 1891

D. W. NAILL,
14-5 Sheriff of Dickinson County, Kas.

First published in the ABILENE WEEKLY REFLECTOR, Dec. 3, 1891.

SHERIFF'S SALE.

Under and by virtue of an order of sale issued by the Clerk of the district court of Dickinson county, state of Kansas, in a cause pending therein, wherein D. Henry Osborne is plaintiff and Richard Devin and W. B. Lowrance are defendants, I will,

On Monday, Jan. 4, A. D. 1892,

at the front door of the court house, in the city of Abilene, county of Dickinson, State of Kansas, at 10 o'clock a. m. of said day sell to the highest bidder for cash, the following described real estate to-wit:

The north half of the northwest quarter of section thirty-two (32), in township sixteen (16), range one (1) east, of the sixth principal meridian in Dickinson county, state of Kansas.

The said real estate will be sold pursuant to the judgment of the court in said cause recited in said order of sale.

Witness my hand this 1st day of Dec., A. D. 1891. D. W. NAILL,
14-5 Sheriff of Dickinson County, Kas.

[First published in the ABILENE WEEKLY REFLECTOR Dec. 3 1891.]

SHERIFF'S SALE.

Under and by virtue of an order of sale issued by the clerk of the district court of Dickinson county, state of Kansas, in a cause pending therein, wherein Mrs. Annie Whitmyer is plaintiff and George W. Beach, Mary M. Beach, The Abilene Investment Company and Millard J. Rich are defendants, I will,

On Monday, Jan. 4, A. D. 1892,

at the front door of the court house, in the city of Abilene, county of Dickinson, state of Kansas, at 10 o'clock a. m. of said day sell to the highest bidder for cash, the following described real estate to-wit:

The northwest quarter of section eighteen (18), in township sixteen (16) south, of range one (1) east of the sixth principal meridian in Dickinson county, state of Kansas.

The said real estate will be sold pursuant to the judgment of the court in said cause recited in said order of sale.

Witness my hand this 2nd day of Dec., A. D. 1891.

D. W. NAILL,
14-5 Sheriff of Dickinson County, Kas.